



New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association

March 3, 2022

Testimony of the New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association

Connecticut General Assembly
Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees

**RE: HB. 5353 - AN ACT CONCERNING A FAIR WORK WEEK SCHEDULE; and
SB. 312- AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS.**

Co-Chair Kushner, Co-Chair Porter, Vice Chair Cabrera, Vice Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee:

The New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association (NECSEMA) represents the interests of convenience retailers, transportation fuels distributors and the businesses which supply them in Connecticut and throughout New England. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS), Connecticut is home to almost 1,700 convenience stores employing over 25,000 people.

HB5353 – Opposed

As proposed, HB5353 would place a tremendous burden on convenience retail employers at a time when additional employment related burdens are the last thing they need. Finding employees has been a challenge for the better part of 2 years triggered by the Great Resignation. Despite offering higher wages and other benefits, finding even marginally qualified employees is a struggle. Turnover is worse than it has ever been. As a result, it would be nearly impossible to abide by the provisions of HB5353. Convenience retailers really need a much higher degree of flexibility than HB5252 provides.

SB312 – Opposed

We appreciate the intent of the 50-person minimum employee threshold, but any proposal that makes it harder for retailers to staff at a time when hiring is harder than it perhaps ever been is not something we can support. As proposed, SB312 lowers the hourly threshold to accrue the maximum paid sick days and adds up to 2 full weeks of Covid-related leave. This would place an incredible burden on our ability to adequately staff our stores and properly provide for our customers. At a time when serious Covid illness is waning and qualified employers are hard to find, we feel this is not the right time nor the right approach for a bill of this nature.

Our members' employees are their greatest asset and recognize they have a choice of where they want to work. This ability to come and go is the greatest incentive to treat them very well. We are experiencing unprecedented labor shortages, rising inflation, supply chain shortages and a changing landscape where the daily rush of customers is flattening throughout the day as commuting routines have been upended. Now is not the time to impose additional rules on retailers.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our position opposing these bills.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian P. Moran".

Brian P. Moran
Director Government Affairs

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